

## Mapping Psychosocial Capital, Commitment, and Crisis Self Efficacy For Improving Vuca E- Learning Environment

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/20348> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/20348

**Published Date:** 22 December 2023

### Abstract

In today's evolving educational environment, teachers are shouldering ever-mounting responsibilities, particularly due to transformative factors such as the challenges posed by e-learning. This transition has also magnified existing disparities in access to educational resources, further intensifying the burdens borne by teachers, ultimately influencing their dedication and emotional well-being. These transformations have a profound impact on teachers' commitment and overall morale. The acronym VUCA, which stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, aptly characterizes these intricate challenges that have been thrust into the spotlight by the COVID-19 pandemic. The current study aims to build a framework upon a comprehensive review of empirical and theoretical research and seeks to stimulate further discussions and investigations into exploring VUCA's Impact on teachers' psychosocial capital, crisis self-efficacy, and work commitment. The current study contributes to the global endeavor to attain these vital sustainability objectives by underscoring the imperative of aligning educational strategies with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Quality Education (SDG 4) and Well-being (SDG 3).

**Keywords:** Crisis Self-Efficacy, Psychosocial Capital, Teachers' Work Commitment, E-Learning Challenges, VUCA Educational Environment

**Introduction**

Schools employed virtual teaching and learning techniques to ensure that students continued their education during the coronavirus pandemic (Azhari & Fajri, 2022). However, this change presented difficulties for teachers, such as stress, anxiety, higher workloads, and poor working conditions (Ceglie et al., 2022). Due to lack of resources and knowledge, teachers were ill-equipped to handle these difficulties, which caused a decline in their work commitment (Bubb & Jones, 2020).

However, some teachers showed a higher level of dedication to their jobs by being creative and tenacious (Bubb & Jones, 2020). They welcomed the extra burden and looked for innovative teaching methods, which sparked more innovation and professionalization (Findlow, 2008). They saw that dedicated difficulties are chances to advance their craft and raise student engagement (Scull et al., 2020).

As it is known, Teachers' psychological health is essential for efficient teaching and learning procedures (Aisha & Ratra, 2022). Therefore, teachers' credibility was impacted by their inability to adapt and perform adequately due to the sudden changes during COVID-19 (Joshi et al., 2021). To manage psychological stress, teachers need resources, and they see difficulties as possibilities. Self-esteem, optimism, self-efficacy, hope, resilience, social skills, and support are all components of psychological capital, and they all contribute to the development of coping skills (Breidenstein et al., 2019). This, in turn, increases teachers' commitment to their jobs (Khudov et al., 2020). However, uncertainty persists regarding the precise psychosocial capital subconstructs that affect work commitment.

To describe the situation faced by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's essential to consider the framework of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, commonly referred to as VUCA. This acronym encapsulates the challenges teachers encountered, and it's worth exploring its characteristics (Moorhouse, 2020).

In this context, a VUCA challenge embodies several key aspects. Firstly, it's marked by volatility, meaning unexpected, abrupt, and often adverse changes. Teachers grappled with constant shifts and disruptions in their educational environments. Secondly, the situation was characterized by uncertainty, where circumstances and outcomes remained highly unpredictable, causing considerable stress and adaptation challenges (Beason-Abmayr et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the pandemic teaching landscape was notably complex, involving a multitude of interconnected elements and factors. Teachers faced difficulties in comprehending the intricate web of challenges presented to them. Lastly, ambiguity was pervasive, with a lack of clarity permeating (Baguri et al., 2022). In order to overcome VUCA difficulties and increase organizational agility and responsiveness to change, leadership development and self-efficacy among teachers becomes essential (Petrie, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to provide theoretical support for the relationship between psychosocial capital, crisis self-efficacy, and work commitment among Malaysian teachers in light of the existing empirical and methodological gaps. The study uses e-learning during COVID-19 as a case study for the crisis and sheds light on which led to e-learning as the main challenges during that time. In order to gain a clear understanding of this matter and comprehend the challenges faced by teachers during the crisis, several vital factors need to be examined. Therefore, the following introduction will present the theoretical framework constructed from existing theories and previous studies. It will cover the concept of teacher work commitment, the various challenges faced by teachers during the pandemic, and the

exploration of psychosocial capital as a coping mechanism, along with the concept of crisis self-efficacy.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The proposed framework of this study revolves around the interplay of crisis self-efficacy, psychosocial capital, and professional commitment. Specifically, the research aims to examine how VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) affects teachers' dedication by elucidating the intricate relationship between teachers' psychosocial capital and their commitment to their profession, students, and workplace. This comprehensive framework seeks to illuminate the complex relationships among crisis self-efficacy, psychosocial capital, and professional commitment during challenging circumstances, providing valuable insights into the factors that influence educators' dedication and resilience when faced with adversity.

This framework draws upon three prominent theories and integrates findings from previous studies. These theories include Thien et al.'s (2014) theory, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, and Bandura's (1990) Social Cognitive Theory.

The study explores several key variables, namely: 1) Teacher Work Commitment During Crisis Events, 2) Teacher Psychosocial Capital During Crisis Events, 3) Crisis Self-Efficacy of Teachers.

### **Teachers' Work Commitment during Crisis Events**

The theoretical framework of this study centers on the interplay of crisis self-efficacy, psychosocial capital, and professional commitment. According to the Teacher Work Commitment theory proposed by Mayer and Allen (1990) and supported by Thien et al. (2014), teachers' commitment comprises two major elements: organizational commitment and commitment to students' learning. These fundamental commitments are influenced by various factors, including psychological, leadership, workplace, and personal aspects, making a comprehensive understanding of these aspects essential in the field of education.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes in how teachers operate, particularly in adapting to the new norms of digitalized teaching practices. To address the challenges posed by virtual teaching, teachers must equip themselves with the knowledge, competencies, skills, and readiness to adopt these new techniques. In this context, teacher commitment becomes a critical concern, as teachers play a pivotal role in enhancing students' knowledge, addressing student dropouts, assisting those with learning difficulties, and motivating disengaged learners, particularly among underprivileged populations.

Furthermore, commitment, as defined by Zhang and Jiang (2023), encompasses the attachment to the duties and responsibilities necessary to fulfill one's professional obligations. It signifies the extent to which teachers are connected to their roles, affecting their inclination to remain within the organization or consider leaving it (Kotzé & Nel, 2020). Additionally, commitment, which includes actions, intentions, and expectations that foster collaborative dynamics among team members, generates positive energy and influences performance at both individual and team levels. Therefore, commitment to managing challenging situations and maintaining professionalism is intricately tied to teachers' professional identities (Day, 2008).

Being a dedicated teacher during times of crisis is crucial for enhancing teacher engagement and fostering continuous learning, particularly among disadvantaged student groups (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023). Committed educators actively engage with their students, monitor their progress, strive to master various teaching methods, and possess an internal

drive that compels them to invest additional time and effort in their professional endeavors (Day, 2008). In essence, teacher commitment influences their behaviors and actions, elucidating why teachers often go above and beyond, investing their own time, resources, effort, and finances to ensure students' academic success (Collie et al., 2011).

In addition, assessing teacher dedication is a complex task that extends beyond mere instruction (Richards et al., 2019). Teacher commitment is a multifaceted concept encompassing various aspects, including a psychological commitment to achieving academic goals, instructing students, facilitating student growth, and upholding a professional career (Thien et al., 2014)[31]. Thien et al. (2014) have validated an instrument that incorporates multidimensional categories such as commitment to the school, dedication to students, commitment to teaching, and commitment to the profession, providing a comprehensive measure of teacher commitment.

Despite the recognized importance of teacher dedication, research has indicated that commitment levels among school teachers varied during the pandemic outbreak. For instance, Malik and Tyagi's research (2020) revealed that the personal stress induced by the pandemic led to reduced commitment when teaching online. Additionally, Chanana (2021) found low levels of dedication among instructors due to work-family tension during the epidemic. A study of teachers indicated a moderate level of commitment, demonstrating adaptability to online teaching and learning in changing circumstances (Chanana, 2021). The level of commitment was also influenced by other factors. Consequently, further investigation is warranted to determine the factors that influence teacher dedication while upholding high standards of instruction during times of crisis.

Moreover, several studies have explored the impact of the transition to online teaching, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, on teachers' Work Commitment. Adedoyin and Soykan (2023) found that teachers faced additional workload challenges as they had to adapt their course content for e-platforms. Adnan and Anwar (2020) noted a significant increase in teacher workload due to the complexities of online teaching. Avery and Park (2016) highlighted the psychological impact on teachers in India, where rising anxiety levels were attributed to the challenges of the lockdown situation, particularly for those requiring fieldwork, school visits, and laboratory work. Similarly, Moorhouse (2020) found that the swift shift to online teaching led to anxiety and affected motivation among practical teachers, who faced difficulties in preparing suitable teaching materials and lacked "live" teaching experience. Hargreave and Fullan (2020) reported a lack of student engagement during online learning, resulting in deteriorated student-teacher relationships and increased difficulties in teacher collaboration. Bhatia and Mohsin (2020) identified challenges that affected both personal and professional life, pushing some teachers into the negative happiness zone. Bhatia, Mohsin (2020) noted growing anxiety and stress among teachers in Australia. Moorhouse (2020) discussed the prompt implementation of online teaching in Hong Kong, which placed additional responsibilities on teachers, requiring them to demonstrate greater commitment to teaching. Li et al. (2020) reported an increasing prevalence of anxiety among teachers during the pandemic. Li et al. (2020) highlighted the difficulty of identifying the best methods for student assessment, which added to teachers' workload and concerns about instructional delivery. Discussed the lack of resources and teachers' inexperience with technology, which affected their commitment and teaching quality. Joshi et al. (2021) found that online teaching increased teachers' workload and caused anxiety and stress. Huang (2020) mentioned increased job demands for teachers, including changes in day-to-day teaching activities and curriculum adjustments. Lim and Asbury (2020) pointed out the

additional responsibilities teachers faced, including balancing their work and personal lives. Kamal and Illiyan (2021) reported increased teacher workload due to virtual teaching, including the creation of digital content and challenges related to student assessment Okyere et al. (2023), highlighted the psychological impact of academic loss and changes in instructional delivery, resulting in feelings of burden and complicated emotions among teachers due to lockdowns and isolation.

**Proposition 1:** *During times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher commitment is significantly influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including psychological commitment to academic goals, adaptability to changing teaching methods, and the ability to manage increased workload and stressors. Understanding these multifaceted dimensions of commitment is essential for supporting and enhancing educators' dedication and resilience in the face of adversity.*

### **Teachers' Psychosocial Capital during Crisis Events**

Research on psychosocial aspects has gained prominence in various fields, including health (Taylor, 2011), management (Vahtera et al., 2000), and psychology (Donaldson et al., 2011). This research underscores the role of psychosocial capital, encompassing psychosocial resources and coping resources, in addressing mental health challenges and enhancing overall well-being. Psychosocial capital closely aligns with coping behavior, equipping individuals with the necessary resources to effectively manage life's challenges.

Drawing inspiration from Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, this study elucidates how psychosocial capital enhances teachers' work commitment. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators have encountered unprecedented challenges, necessitating rapid adaptation to new teaching methods and technological advancements. These transitions have elevated teachers' workloads and placed greater demands on their mental resilience. Depleted resources for managing psychological distress can lead to burnout and diminished life satisfaction. Therefore, in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) situations, the transformation of teaching—shifting from in-person instruction to virtual or online formats—poses challenges, including shortcomings in student engagement in the new environment, along with the need for additional resources to support teachers in adapting to these changes (Mahapatra & Sharma, 2021).

The stress and challenges associated with using online teaching methods have significantly impacted teachers' happiness (Bhatia & Mohsin, 2020). Teachers have had to exhibit increased dedication and support for their students in response to societal unrest triggered by the pandemic (Wong & Moorhouse, 2020). As it is well-known, dwindling resources for coping with psychological distress eventually lead to burnout and have adverse effects on life satisfaction.

Recent studies shed light on the intricate relationship between educators' psychological well-being, resilience, and their commitment to their profession. Bhatia and Mohsin (2020) emphasize that individuals' confidence and belief in their own abilities to navigate challenging circumstances can significantly enhance their commitment to their jobs. Similarly, Hu et al. (2022) have discovered that psychological capital, encompassing aspects like optimism and self-efficacy, plays a pivotal role in predicting teachers' career commitment.

Furthermore, Ghaslani et al. (2023) highlights the profound impact of teachers' resilience on their commitment, well-being, and job satisfaction. Resilience, as perceived by teachers, equips them with the tools to effectively handle the inherent stressors of their profession.

Meanwhile, Yin et al. (2023) study underscores the importance of teachers' psychological well-being in fostering commitment. Psychological well-being, described as the harmony between feeling good and functioning effectively in one's life, equips educators with the ability to cope with stressors and remain dedicated to their roles. Shin et al. (2023) found a strong connection between teachers' confidence in their professional capacities and their engagement in professional development activities. In contrast, Zhang and Jiang (2023) research highlights the detrimental effects of emotional vulnerability, which can lead to burnout and weaken some teachers' commitment to their preschool teaching careers. In summary, these research findings collectively underscore the significance of teachers' psychological resilience, well-being, and confidence in shaping their commitment to the teaching profession. These insights can inform strategies to support and empower educators, ultimately contributing to a more committed and motivated teaching workforce.

**Proposition 2:** *Teachers' psychosocial capital, including factors such as confidence, resilience, and psychological well-being, plays a pivotal role in shaping their commitment to the teaching profession, particularly during times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding and enhancing teachers' psychosocial capital can be instrumental in promoting their dedication, resilience, and overall well-being, ultimately contributing to a more effective and motivated teaching workforce.*

### **Crisis Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (2012) has extensively discussed self-efficacy as one of the most potent predictors of behavior. It posits that an individual's belief in their capability to perform specific tasks mobilizes motivation and effort. Given the significant influence of self-efficacy on human behavior, it has been explored in the context of crisis management. Responding effectively to an emergency requires individuals to believe that their actions can bring about meaningful change. Self-efficacy has been linked to disaster preparedness knowledge and behavior (Demuth et al., 2016). The levels of self-efficacy in responding to a crisis determine the degree of effort exerted and the actions taken. Individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to have an emergency plan, seek help effectively during disasters, and engage in fewer risk-taking behaviors.

In general, individuals with high crisis self-efficacy are more likely to feel empowered to manage challenging situations, which, according to Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1986), can be developed and learned through mastery experiences. Mastery experiences involve learning by doing, where individuals gain confidence in new tasks if they are similar to something they have already excelled at (Bandura, 1994). Therefore, the development of crisis self-efficacy among teachers can be beneficial for both educators and the educational system when immediate crises occur, such as natural disasters, global recessions, or conflicts, which may necessitate a shift in teaching and learning approaches (Andrabi et al., 2020). Teachers with crisis self-efficacy are better equipped to handle other potential crises based on their prior experiences.

The lack of research on crisis management abilities is particularly concerning as it can have detrimental effects on individuals and organizations, especially in the context of schools, where it can impact the education system. Unfortunately, studies on crisis self-efficacy among teachers in Malaysia, particularly in the wake of the sudden pandemic outbreak and subsequent lockdowns and school closures, remain scarce (Azhari & Fajri, 2022).

Although there is limited research on crisis self-efficacy and teacher work commitment, Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997) justifies that a teacher's sense of crisis efficacy may

influence their commitment to the profession during crisis scenarios. This is because self-efficacy contributes to motivation, persistent effort, determination to achieve goals, and the use of effective strategies (Ochoa Pacheco et al., 2023). Furthermore, self-efficacy reflects confidence and the ability to exert control in specific situations, qualities that are conducive to strong commitment (Ochoa Pacheco et al., 2023). Supporting this notion, a study by Baloran and Hernan (2020) demonstrated a significant positive relationship between crisis self-efficacy and teacher work commitment. Efficacious teachers set goals and maintain a strong commitment to achieving them. Therefore, crisis self-efficacy emerges as a crucial variable that helps teachers consistently identify their strengths and weaknesses in crisis preparedness and determine the appropriate actions to take despite unprecedented events (Avery & Park, 2016).

Furthermore, crisis self-efficacy may mediate the relationship between psychosocial capital and teacher work commitment. Research by Avery and Park (2016) in the development of a crisis self-efficacy scale underscores the need to explore its role as a mediator due to the substantial influence of perceived self-efficacy beliefs on human behavior. Specifically, teachers with high crisis self-efficacy, better equipped to manage crises, are more likely to possess psychosocial capital, effectively cope with psychological distress, and maintain a stronger commitment to their profession. However, there is an empirical gap that needs to be addressed to substantiate these findings. Therefore, future research is suggested to bridge this gap, providing empirical evidence on how and why psychosocial capital affects teacher commitment, with a focus on the presence of crisis self-efficacy.

***Proposition 3:*** *Crisis self-efficacy plays a mediating role in the relationship between teachers' psychosocial capital and their work commitment. Teachers with higher levels of psychosocial capital are more likely to exhibit greater crisis self-efficacy, which, in turn, positively influences their commitment to their profession, particularly during challenging situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding the mediating role of crisis self-efficacy can inform interventions aimed at enhancing teachers' psychosocial capital, ultimately fostering their commitment and resilience in times of crisis.*

### **Psychosocial Capital, Crisis Self-Efficacy, and Teacher Work Commitment Framework**

Drawing from the constructs that have emerged from the literature and the theoretical framework, psychosocial capital encompasses elements such as hope, optimism, resilience, social skills, and a sense of mattering. These resources empower teachers to effectively navigate challenges in VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) situations, including increased workloads, added responsibilities, and psychological distress. Consequently, teachers are better equipped to manage these demanding situations and consistently exhibit commitment to their school, students, teaching, and profession. They can fulfill their roles by achieving school goals, engaging with students, embracing innovative teaching methods, and achieving career satisfaction (López-Torres et al., 2022).

To ensure the continuity of the teaching and learning process, teachers must possess psychological capital, especially during unexpected and immediate pandemic outbreaks. Although the digitization of learning may introduce additional workloads, teachers view this challenge as an opportunity to enhance their technological skills and introduce innovative teaching methods to improve student engagement. While both psychosocial capital and teacher work commitment have a significant impact, crisis self-efficacy can serve as a mediator in this relationship. The presence of crisis self-efficacy can explain how and why

psychosocial capital influences teacher work commitment in specific situations during a pandemic outbreak crisis.

Assessments of crisis self-efficacy among teachers can shield them from prolonged distress and minimize the adverse effects of crises, such as burnout and reduced commitment (Shahzad et al., 2023). During crises, teachers can take proactive measures, identify preventive strategies to mitigate risks, achieve their goals, and effectively manage uncertainties. Evaluating self-efficacy levels helps teachers gain a better understanding of their capabilities, while also encouraging the development of intervention programs related to crisis management. These interventions enhance crisis preparedness and boost crisis self-efficacy among teachers in readiness for future crises. In essence, recognizing the role of crisis self-efficacy as a mediator provides a more comprehensive explanation of behavioral changes[60].

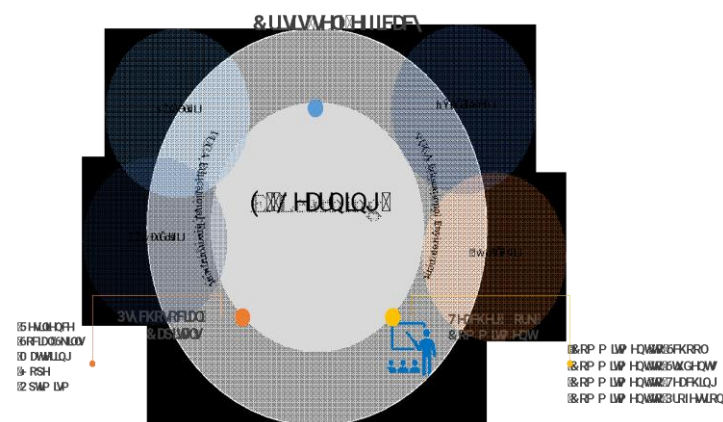


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

### Future Research Directions

The current study contributed to the field of educational psychology, specifically positive psychology. This study discussed that psychosocial capital directly affects teacher work commitment to students. In a crisis event, crisis self-efficacy does not mediate the relationship. Teachers with high psychosocial capital are highly committed to their students' learning without the need for crisis self-efficacy. However, psychosocial capital can indirectly affect the teacher's commitment to school, teaching, and profession if it is mediated by crisis self-efficacy. Crisis self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between psychosocial capital and commitment to teaching and commitment to profession. Then, crisis self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between psychosocial capital and teacher commitment to school. However, there were some limitations that need to be considered for future research. Future research could investigate the role of school leaders in fostering teacher work commitment and crisis self-efficacy. Understanding how leadership styles and practices influence these factors could provide valuable insights for improving teacher commitment during crises. Also, as mentioned, it is recommended to conduct a comparative study among teachers from various types of schools, such as vocational colleges, boarding schools, and private schools. This research could delve into how organizational culture and contextual factors unique to these school types affect teacher work commitment and crisis self-efficacy differently. While the current study only discuss the conceptual framework, , future research could employ quantitatively and qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of how crisis self-efficacy mediates the relationship between teacher work commitment and other



variables. Qualitative interviews or focus groups with teachers could provide valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions. Building on the findings that crisis self-efficacy plays a significant role, future research could develop and test intervention programs or training modules aimed at enhancing teachers' crisis self-efficacy. Assessing the impact of these interventions on teacher commitment and performance during crises would be beneficial. To understand the dynamics of teacher work commitment and crisis self-efficacy over time, future researchers might consider longitudinal studies that track these variables before, during, and after a crisis. This could reveal how long-term experiences and adaptations impact these crucial aspects of teacher well-being. Given that crisis self-efficacy did not mediate the relationship between psychosocial capital and teacher commitment in your study, future research could investigate other potential mediating variables. Variables like technological proficiency, subject knowledge, or even teacher well-being could be explored to better understand the underlying mechanisms at play. Conducting cross-cultural studies to compare teacher work commitment and crisis self-efficacy across different cultural contexts could provide valuable insights into how cultural factors influence these constructs. This research could help identify cultural-specific strategies for supporting teachers during crises. Investigate the effectiveness of various support interventions, such as mentoring programs, peer support networks, or professional development opportunities, in enhancing teacher work commitment and crisis self-efficacy. Understanding which interventions are most effective in different contexts can guide educational policy and practice. With the rise of hybrid teaching models that combine in-person and online instruction, future research could explore how these models affect teacher work commitment and crisis self-efficacy. This is particularly relevant in a post-pandemic education landscape.

Investigate the concept of teacher resilience in the context of crisis situations. Explore how teachers bounce back from challenges, adapt to new circumstances, and maintain their commitment to students and teaching. These research recommendations can help expand the knowledge base on teacher work commitment, crisis self-efficacy, and their interplay, contributing to the development of more effective strategies for supporting educators in challenging times.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study has delved into the intricate interplay between psychosocial capital, crisis self-efficacy, and teacher work commitment, particularly in the context of VUCA situations, including the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our findings shed light on the critical role of these constructs in influencing educators' dedication and resilience during times of crisis. Importantly, this research aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 3 (Well-being).

Firstly, the Quality Education (SDG 4): the current study underscores the significance of quality education, especially during crisis events. Teachers, as the backbone of the education system, play a pivotal role in ensuring that students continue to receive a high standard of education, even in challenging circumstances. By enhancing teacher work commitment through the cultivation of psychosocial capital and crisis self-efficacy, we contribute to the goal of providing inclusive and equitable quality education to all. This commitment translates into teachers' dedication to their students' learning, which is fundamental to achieving SDG 4.

Secondly, Well-being (SDG 3): The well-being of educators is a critical component of this study. The psychosocial well-being of teachers directly impacts their ability to cope with stressors and remain dedicated to their profession. By emphasizing the importance of well-being, we align with SDG 3's objective of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. Moreover, crisis self-efficacy acts as a protective factor against prolonged distress and burnout, further contributing to the well-being of teachers facing crisis situations. In essence, our research offers valuable insights and a comprehensive framework for enhancing teacher commitment and resilience, ultimately advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of Quality Education and Well-being. By prioritizing the psychological well-being and crisis preparedness of educators, we contribute to a more resilient and dedicated teaching workforce, which, in turn, benefits students and society as a whole.

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